

Galileo Plans for Shoemaker-Levy 9 Observations

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The Galileo spacecraft will have the best direct view of the predicted S-L9 impact sites of any observing platform. In July '94 the range to Jupiter will be ~ 1.5 au and the Jupiter solar phase angle $\sim 50^\circ$. The impacts should occur in southern latitudes in the pre-dawn portion of Jupiter's night side visible from Galileo. An observation and data return strategy has been developed by the Galileo team which should allow a good chance of observing both the initial high altitude meteors and the subsequent fireballs created by several of the S-L 9 fragment impacts. These observations should supply important information on the energetic and physics of the impacts and their effects on Jupiter's system. This work was carried out at JPL/CIT under a contract from NASA.